

## Awakening

by Moonsong

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Summary: SPOILERS Entire Series- Taka must find a way to save Miaka from his mirror image. AN: Does the fic work with or without the lyrics? Let me know!

## Awakening

><br>@-;--- @-;--- @-;--- @-;--- @-;--- @-;--- @-;---  
><br>  
><br> \*\* SPOILERS FOR ENTIRE SERIES UP TO & INCLUDING OVA 2 \*\*  
> BASED ON MANGA VOL. 18<br>  
><br>  
>@-;--- @-;--- @-;--- @-;--- @-;--- @-;--- @-;---<br>  
><br>  
>Awakening<br>By Moonsong  
>tsukinouta@yahoo.com<br>  
><br>Taka pushed the wood-framed door open silently and paused.  
Inside  
>the room, Miaka, his love, his heart, lay unconscious from the  
<br>last enemy attack. A man, whose face was identical to his own,  
  
>hovered by her bedside, holding her hand gently, mutely pleading  
<br>for her to awaken.  
><br>Tamahome. A name he had heard more frequently than he cared to  
  
>think about. A man whose memories he had held until they had been  
<br>stolen from him. The man he used to be... or so he had been told.  
  
>But now, it was obvious that he couldn't possibly be Tamahome.  
<br>Not when the man was sitting there in front of him. They shared  
  
>the same build, the same face, the same friends, and a deep love  
<br>for the woman lying in the bed in front of them. Miaka.  
><br>~ Oh desert speak to my heart  
>Oh woman of the earth ~<br>  
>Taka's heart ached. Now that Tamahome, the real Tamahome was  
<br>here,

>there was no need for him anymore. An empty shell. That's all he  
<br>was. The shadow of a great Suzaku seishi. Someone to take

>Tamahome's place with Miaka and the others until the real one had  
<br>awakened from his divinely imposed slumber. And now that the

>warrior had returned, it was time for him to go. To leave her.  
<br>Even though it broke his heart.

><br>Half of him raged in anger. How DARE the gods play with him like

>this? He was a human being! With feelings and emotions. Suzaku  
<br>had

>just ripped him out of his life, forced him in the midst of this  
<br>absurd situation and made him fall in love, only to wrench

>everything he had fought for away from him. It wasn't FAIR! He  
<br>had

>more of a right to life than these people who were only

<br>characters

>in a book!<br>

>THAT thought halted him right there. Recent memories replayed

<br>through his mind- Hotohori, who'd died saving his country and

>never had the chance to hold his son in real life; Tasuki, who'd  
<br>near committed suicide at the thought of betraying his dearest

>friends; Chichiri, who'd lived such a painful life and still  
<br>managed to be their rock when everything went to hell. The

>others, <br>Nuriko, Mitsukake, Chiriko; while he no longer had first  
hand

>memories of them, he knew of their heroic sacrifices to protect  
<br>them all.

><br>More right to live? No. They were far more honorable than he and

>thus deserved far more. He had only been a vessel after all. A  
<br>shadow. He'd never done anything great or important. He was

>just... <br>Taka.

><br>~ Maker of children who weep for love

>Maker of this birth ~<br>

>'Suzaku-seikun, please let me be strong,' he prayed, shutting his  
<br>eyes against the tears that threatened to spill. 'Grant me the

>strength to do what's right. For her.'<br>

>He took a deep breath and stepped into the room. "How is she?" he  
<br>asked softly.

><br>The other man smiled. "She's fine. She's sleeping."

><br>Taka nodded in relief. "I... I'm going back home. To that  
world,"

>he <br>said after a moment.

><br>Tamahome faced him in surprise. "What?"

><br>"Now that you're back, there's no need for me to be here any

>longer. There's no need to look for the stones..." <br>

>"Are you sure?" <br>

>~ 'Til your deepest secrets are known to me <br>I will not be moved

~

><br>Instead of answering, Taka took the ring, his and Miaka's  
wedding

>ring off his finger. 'Steady, man. You can do this. You HAVE to  
<br>do  
>this...' He studied the ring, already missing its familiar  
<br>presence.  
>With trembling hands, he blindly offered the prize in the  
<br>direction of the bed. "This... this belongs to you."

><br>Tamahome's eyes widened. " This... is from the wedding ceremony  
>with <br>Miaka before the fight with Nakago... Thank Suzaku!! I was  
>looking <br>all over for that!" he exclaimed. "Are you sure?" he  
asked again.  
><br>Before his tears fell, Taka nodded and turned abruptly to leave  
>the room. He was halfway out the door when a hand on his shoulder  
<br>stopped him.  
><br>"Thank you." He heard the other man say behind his back. "Thank  
>you for being with Miaka in my place."<br>  
>"You're... welcome." Taka choked without turning his head. He  
<br>felt  
>the pressure on his shoulder disappear and continued out the door  
<br>at a fast walk. And didn't look back.  
><br>~ I will not be moved ~  
><br>Hurriedly, before he could change his mind, he headed to  
Tasuki's  
>room and picked up Miaka's beeper. The gadget glowed with a faint  
<br>reddish light. It was time to go.  
><br>"Taka! What do you think you're doing?"  
><br>Taka spun around. Before him stood the six remaining Suzaku  
>seishi, on their faces a mixture of shock and confusion.<br>  
>Taka laughed nervously. "I'm going home..."<br>  
>Hotohori advanced slowly. "Without Miaka? Have you lost your wits  
<br>completely?"  
><br>~ Don't try to find the answer  
>When there ain't no question here ~<br>  
>"I... I was only a shadow, remember? Now that the real Tamahome  
<br>is  
>here, he and Miaka can call Suzaku. Then everyone will be  
<br>reborn!"  
><br>The seishi remained unconvinced.  
><br>"So... you just plan on disappearing alone?" Nuriko countered.  
>"You're just going to run away from him?"<br>  
>"It's better this way... I'm... not the man you thought I was."<br>  
>Hotohori's eyes widened in shocked surprise. "Were you not the  
<br>one  
>who allowed me to hold Boushin?" <br>  
>"That's right!" Nuriko broke in. "Wasn't it YOU who endured pain  
<br>to the point of pushing aside my superhuman strength? Just so you  
>could be with her?"<br>  
>"You... you risked your life along with Tasuki to save me..."  
<br>Chichiri added.  
><br>Tasuki, who had frozen at the initial realization of what Taka  
>was <br>doing, broke out of his daze. "Wasn't... wasn't it you..."

><br>Taka met his gaze sadly, his eyes pleading with him not to  
>continue. 'Don't, Tasuki,' he begged silently, 'don't make this  
<br>any harder than it already is.'  
><br>"It was... you..."  
><br>'Don't...'  
><br>~ Brother let your heart be wounded  
>And give no mercy to your fear ~<br>  
>Suddenly Tasuki's eyes widened and he faced Taka accusingly. "It  
<br>was you! You believed in me... and cried when you saved me!"  
  
><br>Taka dropped his head in a mixture of shame and remorse. Tasuki  
  
>advanced and shook his friend's shoulders violently. <br>  
>"What happened? Didn't you say that your feelings for Miaka would  
<br>never change?"  
><br>Gently, Taka broke away and stepped back, head still down.  
  
><br>"Taka, I believe you are the real Tamahome! The symbol... the  
  
>power... <br>they don't matter!" Chiriko whimpered.  
><br>Raising his head, Taka gazed at his friends one last time. "Take  
  
>care, everyone," he whispered, "and thank you... for  
<br>everything..."  
><br>A familiar red light surrounded him and bathed him in its  
warmth.  
>Tasuki reached for him. "Tama..."<br>  
>"Wo ai ni..." <br>  
>Tasuki broke into a run. "Don't go!" <br>  
>It was too late. The red mist cleared, taking Taka with it. The  
<br>flame-haired bandit collapsed to the ground and raised his voice  
  
>to the sky. "TAMAHOME!"<br>  
>~~~~~<br>  
>~ Adam and eve live down the street from me <br>Babylon is every  
town ~  
><br>Taka materialized in Keisuke's room, his heart already  
regretting  
>what he had just done. 'It's for the best,' he repeated over and  
<br>over, 'I was never meant to be with them...'  
><br>Pushing himself up from the floor, he silently surveyed his  
  
>surroundings. 'I should get home before their Mom gets here...  
<br>wait  
>a minute...' he smacked his forehead and chuckled derisively, 'I  
<br>don't HAVE a home! It was destroyed by that guy trying to be a  
  
>god <br>who's really a fictional character and who's not supposed to  
even  
>exist in the first place! Ha ha ha!'  
>This was good. He was really losing it. In fact, the entire  
<br>situation was making him nearly hysterical. Whether from grief,  
  
>or <br>pain, or joy... it didn't really matter anymore. Nothing  
mattered  
>now that he had left her. His mock revelry carried him to the  
<br>full-length mirror on one side of the room. He gazed at the

>mirror, shocked for a moment, then released one last chuckle  
>before collapsing against the cool glass in despair.

><br>"You're so pathetic, you don't even deserve to have a

>reflection," <br>he addressed the transparent space in the mirror  
that should have

>held his image. <br>

>It came without warning. Taka's head snapped up and saw his face  
<br>in the mirror... but it was not his face. It was Tamahome's. He

>flinched back automatically but found out his hands were glued to  
<br>the mirror. He was trapped.

><br>

>~ It's as crazy as it's ever been <br>Love's a stranger all around ~

><br>"You're so stupid, Taka," his "twin" mocked. "Whatever possessed

>you to go back?"<br>

>For the first time since his return, Taka wondered if he had made  
<br>a horrible mistake. "Who are you?"

><br>The figure in the mirror laughed derisively. "You still don't  
get

>it, do you? I hold the memories and powers of your previous self.

<br>I got them from something the present you lost..."

><br>Taka's eyes widened. 'The stones...' With an anguished cry he

>faced <br>the apparition. "You BASTARD!"

><br>It chuckled back at him. "Such a way to speak to yourself..."

>Those <br>stones are in me now. That makes you the fake!"

><br>"NOOOO!!!"

><br>~ In a moment we lost our minds here

>And lay our spirit down ~<br>

>Behind them, the door to the bedroom opened and closed. "Taka?"<br>

>In the mirror, Tamahome grinned. "Ah, Keisuke. It's been a  
<br>while..."

><br>Keisuke gazed at the apparition wide-eyed. "T-tamahome?"

><br>"Surprised to see me? Oh, by the way, Miaka's here with me now.  
I

>don't think she's coming back..."<br>

>"Damn you!" Taka screamed, struggling against the mirror.<br>

>Tamahome laughed again. "It's too late for that. So long Taka!"<br>

>With a flash, the mirror cracked and he was gone, taking with him  
<br>the invisible bonds holding Taka. He slumped to the floor, blood

>dripping freely from random cuts all over his body caused by the  
<br>glass shards.

><br>Keisuke hurried to his side. "What happened? Why did Tamahome

>break my mirror?"<br>

>Taka shook his head. That was the least of his problems.

<br>"Keisuke, I have to find a way back... to warn them. Miaka's in

>danger!" He took out the pager and jabbed at it furiously.

<br>"Dammit, it's not working!"  
><br>~ Today we lived a thousand years  
>All we have is now ~<br>  
>Taka shot up. "I've got to get to her!"<br>  
>~ Run to the water<br>And find me there  
>Burnt to the core but not broken <br>We'll cut through the madness  
  
>Of these streets below the moon <br>With a nuclear fire of love in  
our hearts ~  
><br>~~~~~  
>Meanwhile back in Konan, Miaka was waking up. The first thing she  
<br>saw was Tamahome's worried face hovering closely above her. She  
  
>smiled at first, reaching a hand out to touch her beloved's face,  
<br>but then stopped. There was something different about him. She  
  
>couldn't place exactly what it was. He looked the same, sounded  
<br>the same, even smelled the same... but there was something  
  
>missing...<br>  
>Suddenly, Miaka shot up. "Taka! Where is he?" Panic rising, she  
<br>tried to force her way past Tamahome.  
> <br>"Shh," he soothed, gathering her into his arms. "He's okay. He  
  
>said he was going back."<br>  
>Her eyes widened with fear. "Nani?!?!" <br>  
>She pulled away and searched her former lover's eyes. "No, he  
<br>wouldn't have! He wouldn't have left without me!"  
><br>Tearing away, she jumped off the bed and ran outside calling  
  
>Taka's name. "Taka! Where are you?! TAKA!!"<br>  
>Before she could get very far, a strong hand grabbed her arm  
<br>sharply causing her to cry out in pain. His quarry captured,  
  
>Tamahome forced her back into the room, using his body to shield  
<br>her escape. Miaka stared at him wildly, one arm held up between  
  
>them as if to ward him off.<br>  
>"Miaka! Why are you looking at me like that?" He asked brokenly.  
<br>"Aren't you happy to see me?"  
><br>Miaka blinked. Why was she so afraid? This was Tamahome. Her  
true  
>love. The one she had yearned for all those months and now he was  
<br>standing before her. What was wrong?  
><br>~ And I will never leave you  
>'Til we can say, "this world was just a dream" ~<br>  
>Tama noticed her expression become more reflective and pressed  
<br>his  
>advantage. "Taka left when he realized he was just a shadow. He  
<br>even left me this." Smiling softly, he held out his hand, showing  
  
>her the ring. <br>  
>Miaka's eyes widened. <br>  
>"I tried to stop him, he continued, "but he was adamant." He  
<br>gazed  
>at her tear-streaked face. "Should I have woken you?" <br>  
>No response.<br>  
>"Miaka?" Concerned, Tamahome took her hand and led her to the  
<br>bed.  
>"Look... for now lie down and relax. I'll stay with you."<br>

>Miaka allowed herself to be led to the bed. She gazed at his  
<br>worried face once more, searching. 'I see... this man...

>Tamahome... the warrior from the book, "The Universe of the Four  
<br>Gods," the man I loved. After I asked Suzaku... I believed that

>he <br>was reborn to my world... but... then... what about Taka? His

>heart... his <br>existence...'

><br>Tamahome studied her features, her emotions plainly warring on

>her <br>sweet face. He sat next to her and gathered her in his arms.  
"I

>understand how you feel but I'M here now. You don't need him  
<br>anymore. I'M the one who loves you."

><br>She didn't answer so he tried another tactic. "Suzaku-seikun  
said

>he should be able to regain his powers after you and I are  
<br>linked.

>Once he has, he should be able to seal Tenkou and everyone will  
<br>be

>happy." Gently, he placed a hand under her chin, drawing her face  
<br>to his. "WE can be happy..."

><br>Finally, a spark flashed in her eyes. "Y-you're right."

><br>~ We were sleepin' now we are awake

>'Til we can say ~<br>

>Tamahome smiled and inched closer. "Wo ai ni, Miaka."<br>

>Their lips met.<br>

>~~~~~<br>"Dammit, Keisuke! I HAVE to get back there! They're all in

>danger! <br>And Miaka... Miaka..." The mention of his love brought  
Taka to

>tears. <br>'I WILL return for you Miaka,' he vowed silently. 'No  
matter

>what, <br>I'll find a way to rescue you.'

><br>"I'm sure Miaka will know he's a fake," Keisuke soothed. "You

>guys <br>were..." he coughed, uncomfortable with the thought of his  
sister

>being with anyone. He turned away and picked up the phone to call  
<br>Tetsuya.

><br>Taka paced the room, oblivious to the blond's discomfort.  
"That's

>not the thing. When I was reborn into this world, my memories as  
<br>Tamahome were sealed into seven crystals and given to each of the

>seishi. In order to defeat Tenkou, I have to gather them all and  
<br>get my memories back. But after we had gotten five, Tenkou stole

>them and, my best guess is infused them into another one of his  
<br>demons who's now parading around as me!" He faced Keisuke, eyes

>misting over again. "In a sense, he's more 'me' than I am...  
<br>but...

>but Miaka has to be with ME!"<br>

>~ In a moment we lost our minds here <br>And dreamt the world was  
round ~

><br>Keisuke set the phone back on the receiver and faced his frantic

>friend. "Tetsuya said he'd drive over here with Yui-chan right  
<br>away." At Taka's tearful nod, he began gathering their things.

>"We have to get you out of here before my mom comes home."<br>

>Taka nodded again. "Gomen, Keisuke... for always being a  
<br>nuisance..."

><br>Keisuke stopped in his tracks and studied the other man. A few

>stray tears still crept down Taka's cheeks, mingling with the  
<br>blood from various cuts on his face. With his torn clothing and

>mussed appearance, he really looked like he'd been through the  
<br>wars. His eyes held all of hell in them, their dark depths

>burning <br>with worry and frustration for his lover and friends,  
and an

>intense, deep hatred for their enemy. At that moment, any doubts  
<br>as to how deeply Taka felt towards the seishi and his sister

>vanished and Keisuke vowed to support him as much as he could.<br>

>"Iie, Taka," he began, "I'm the one who should be sorry. For  
<br>doubting you the other day."

><br>Taka met his eyes squarely, that small private fear that Keisuke

>still hated him dissipating as he stared into the other man's  
<br>face. "Arigato, Keisuke."

><br>The blond nodded and flashed him a smile. "Come on. Let's go!"

><br>~ A million mile fall from grace

>Thank god we missed the ground ~<br>

>The two ran downstairs just as Tetsuya pulled up.<br>

>"Tetsuya!" Taka called as he jumped into the car. "Can we stop by  
<br>my apartment?"

><br>Keisuke looked at him incredulously. "What for? The place is a

>smoking ruins. There's nothing left. You've already been listed  
<br>as

>a missing person."<br>

>Taka blinked. "I-I just thought my beeper might be there...  
<br>without

>it..." He buried his head in his hands.<br>

>"Miaka can't come back?" Yui finished, tears forming in her eyes.  
<br>Taka nodded, still facing the floor.

><br>"That's not good," Tetsuya mused. "Without the power of you and

>her, Tenkou can't be sealed."<br>

>Keisuke was near tears himself with frustration. "Isn't there  
<br>anything else we can do?" He looked away so the others couldn't

>see his expression. "Please," he prayed, sending his gaze to the  
<br>sky, "somebody..."

><br>The car door opened and closed. Keisuke looked up to see Taka

>walking purposefully away from the car. "The poor guy's lost  
<br>it..."

>Two more slams and Yui and Tetsuya were out of the car following  
<br>at his heels. Dabbing his moist eyes, Keisuke got out and hurried



>after them.<br>  
>Yui caught up to the him first. "What are you doing?"<br>  
>Taka slowly turned around to face them. Fierce determination  
<br>burned in his eyes and his mouth was set in a grim line. "I'm  
  
>going to call her back."<br>  
>~ Run to the water<br>And find me there  
>Burnt to the core but not broken <br>We'll cut through the madness  
  
>Of these streets below the moon <br>With a nuclear fire of love in  
our hearts ~  
><br>~~~~~  
>"Look, Miaka," Tamahome murmured as he settled in next to her on  
<br>the bed. "We can start over after Tenkou is defeated. Chichiri  
  
>and <br>Tasuki are here... and the others will be reborn as well.  
And  
>besides," his voice grew husky as he pressed against her, "didn't  
<br>I promise you the night of the star-watching festival that I'd  
  
>make you the happiest bride in the world?"<br>  
>Without waiting for her answer, he bent his dark head over hers  
<br>and captured her lips.  
><br>~ Yeah, I can see it now lord  
>Out beyond all the breakin' of waves <br>And the tribulation ~  
  
><br>Miaka closed her eyes, responding automatically to the feel of  
  
>the <br>man she loved beside her. Somewhere, deep in the depths of  
her  
>mind, lingered the nagging feeling that something was wrong.  
<br>That voice was, however, quickly silenced as she felt Tamahome's  
  
>warmth surround her. She relaxed, savoring the moment. <br>  
>- Miaka! -<br>  
>Her eyes flew open, her lips mouthing his name even as Tamahome  
<br>was kissing her. "Taka..."  
><br>Tamahome jerked himself up, eyes blazing. "What?"  
><br>"It's Taka..." Miaka was staring past him, eyes unfocused,  
seeing  
>other places, other times, "You know, it took almost a month  
<br>before I could unmistakably call him 'Taka' instead of  
  
>'Tamahome...' "<br>  
>"What?!"<br>  
>She continued, oblivious to his torment. "Taka was certainly  
<br>different here and there from Tamahome but..."  
><br>Desperate, Tamahome grabbed her arms, pinning her to the bed.  
  
>"Stop this! He no longer has anything to do with you!!"<br>  
>The call came again.<br>  
>- Miaka!! -<br>  
>She continued to see past him, face lighting up at her memories.  
<br>"He always smiled for me... big and wide. And he was always...  
  
>looking <br>at me!"  
><br>~ It's a place and the home of ascended souls  
>Who swam out there in love! ~<br>  
>Tamahome shook her hard. "He can't DO anything anymore! I'M the  
<br>one you love! LOOK at me!"

><br>Finally, Miaka's eyes focused on his frantic face. "No,  
you're...  
>different..."<br>  
>"HOW?"<br>  
>~ Run to the water ~<br>  
>"I don't know!" she wailed, bursting into tears. "But he's the  
<br>one  
>I need now!" she squirmed, freeing herself from his confining  
<br>grip.  
><br>Lost, Tamahome could only stare at her with wide, disbelieving  
  
>eyes. Hot tears pooled underneath his eyelids as he watched the  
<br>woman he loved tear away from him.  
><br>- Miaka!!! -  
><br>~ And find me there ~  
><br>"He's calling!" she cried, shutting her eyes and throwing her  
  
>face <br>heavenwards. "I HAVE to go back! Taka!!"  
><br>~~~~~  
>"MIAKA! Come!"<br>  
>~ Burnt to the core but not broken ~<br>  
>Overhead, the sky was roiling an angry red. The winds picked up  
<br>and shrieked through the trees as a faint rumble of thunder  
  
>boomed <br>in the distance. Yui, Tetsuya, and Keisuke shrank back in  
fear.  
><br>~ We'll cut through the madness ~  
><br>Taka, his face pointed to the sky, stood his ground; eyes and  
  
>fists clenched shut as he concentrated on his beloved. "MIAKA!!"<br>  
  
>~ Of the streets below the moon ~<br>  
>A vision of a swirling phoenix... then, finally, the sound he was  
<br>waiting for.  
><br>~ With the nuclear fire of love in our hearts ~  
><br>"TAKA!!"  
><br>Her sweet voice came from everywhere and nowhere at once,  
echoing  
>through the sky and through his very bones. Taka's eyes flew  
<br>open.  
><br>Like a bird winging home, Miaka materialized from the roiling  
  
>clouds and fell into his waiting arms. Taka enclosed her in his  
<br>embrace, his tears mingling with hers.  
><br>~ Rest easy baby, rest easy ~  
><br>Dimly he heard their surprised gasps as Yui, Tetsuya, and  
Keisuke  
>surrounded them, forming a protective circle around the couple. <br>  
  
>~ And recognize all the light and rainbows<br>Smashed to smithereens  
and be happy ~  
><br>He raised his head briefly, meeting their ecstatic eyes in turn,  
  
>before turning back to his beloved.<br>  
>~ Run to the water and find me there ~<br>  
>"Wo ai ni, Miaka," he murmured over and over as she sobbed his  
<br>name. "I promise I'll never let you go again."  
><br>  
>~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~\*~<br>OWARI  
><br>

>Author's Notes: There is an alternate version of this fic without  
<br>the song lyrics. Sometime during the course of writing the fic, I  
  
>decided to take the lyrics out, but then decided to put up both  
<br>versions anyway. I did re-arrange a few events, omit some lines  
  
>and scenes, and add a few things, you know how I like doing that  
<br>^\_~ but I tried to write this as close to the manga as possible.  
  
>Hope you guys enjoyed it! Comments, feedback and flames ONEGAI-  
<br>tsukinouta@yahoo.com  
><br>Huge hugs to Quicksilver, Lyra, & Ari who proofed this for me;  
  
>and to Tasuki no Miko who graciously let me use her manga  
<br>translations as a reference for this fic. Visit her site at:  
  
><http://www.crosswinds.net/~tasukinomiko/Anime/FY/>  
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